

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 7793

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, GW

SUBJ: FRG VICE CHANCELLOR VISITS ATHENS

1. SUMMARY: THE VISIT TO ATHENS (AUGUST 17-19) BY FRG
VICE CHANCELLOR AND FOREIGN MINISTER HANS-DRIETRICH GENSCHER
FOLLOWED THE GENERAL PATTERN OF PREVIOUS VISITS BY WEST EUROPEAN
LEADERS TO ATHENS SINCE THE RETURN OF DEMOCRACY TO GREECE IN
1974. WHILE THERE WAS LITTLE NEW OF SUBSTANCE, IN HIS PUBLIC
STATEMENTS THE GERMAN GUEST REPEATEDLY (A) PRAISED PRIME
MINISTER CARAMANLIS, (B) PLEDGED FULL FRG SUPPORT FOR THE EARLY
ENTRY OF GREECE INTO THE EC, (C) EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE
PROBLEMS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND (D) REAFFIRMED
GERMAN READINESS TO ASSIST IN BRINGING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO
THE GREEK-TURKISH CONFLICT. END SUMMARY.

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2. FULL AGENDA - IN ADDITION TO MEETING WITH HIS HOST
FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, GENSCHER MET WITH PRIME MINISTER
CARAMANLIS (FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS), WITH PRESIDENT TSATSOS
(A COURTESY CALL), AND WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF.
HE ALSO HAD A LENGTHY JOINT SESSION WITH MINISTER OF
COORDINATION PAPALIGOURAS AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE BANK

OF GREECE, PROFESSOR ZOLOTAS. GENSCHER SUBSEQUENTLY PAID A CALL ON THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADER, UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC) PRESIDENT GEORGE MAVROS.

3. EC ENTRY - FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER OPENED HIS VISIT WITH REASSURANCES CONCERNING GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC). ON HIS ARRIVAL HE WELCOMED GREECE'S APPLICATION TO JOIN THE EC SAYING "WE CONSIDER THIS DECISION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, AND PRECISELY FOR THIS REASON WISH THAT GREECE SHOULD KNOW THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY INTENDS TO SUPPORT FULLY ITS ENTRY INTO THE EC." HOWEVER, GENSCHER ALSO INTRODUCED A NOTE OF CAUTION BY ADDING THAT THERE WERE "MINOR PROCEDURAL DIFFICULTIES" TO BE OVERCOME, ALTHOUGH AT THE SAME TIME HE HASTENED TO ASSURE THAT THE DIFFICULTIES WILL BE SURPASSED. THIS BASIC THEME WAS REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, AND THE PLEDGE OF FRG SUPPORT FOR EC ENTRY WAS A PROMINENT PARAGRAPH IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE VISIT. THE MAIN GERMAN CONCERN OVER GREECE'S ADMISSION INTO THE EC, ACCORDING TO A MFA SOURCE, WAS THE PRECEDENT--WITH AN EYE TOWARD SPAIN AND PORTUGAL--OF GRANTING FULL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT TO GREEK WORKERS, WHICH THE GREEKS WERE INSISTING UPON IN THE EC NEGOTIATIONS.

4. CARAMANLIS - GENSCHER HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, WHO, HE SAID, "IS A FIRM GUARANTEE FOR GREECE'S STEADY POSITION WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE." IN ANOTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER HE SAID CARAMANLIS "ENJOYS GREAT ESTEEM AMONG THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT, THE PARTIES OF THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT AND THE GERMAN PEOPLE. WE ATTACH GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FACT THAT GREECE'S POLITICAL LIFE IS UNDER MR. CARAMANLIS' LEADERSHIP TODAY."

5. EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN - THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN WAS A PRIMARY TOPIC OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN CARAMANLIS AND GENSCHER ACCORDING TO OUR MFA SOURCE WHO HAD NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN BRIEFED ON THE DETAILS OF THE DISCUSSION. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, GENSCHER TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW PUBLICLY GERMANY'S OFFER TO ASSIST IN BRINGING BACK TOGETHER HER TWO NATO ALLIES, GREECE AND TURKEY. "WE ARE WILLING TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO HELP MAKE THIS (RECONCILIATION) A SUCCESS," HE PLEDGED AT THE BANQUET GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY BITSIOS, WHICH THE PRESS SUBSEQUENTLY HEADLINED AS AN FRG OFFER TO MEDIATE THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE. WHEN MEETING THE PRESS LATER, GENSCHER CLARIFIED THAT "AS FAR AS THE WORK MEDIATION IS CONCERNED, I DO NOT LIKE IT BECAUSE IT MAY SO EASILY GIVE RISE TO FALSE EXPECTATIONS." HE INDICATED THE PREFERRED ROLE FOR GERMANY WOULD BE TO ASSIST THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY, POINTING OUT THAT BECAUSE THE FRG MAINTAINS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BOTH GOVERNMENTS

IT COULD PERHAPS BE HELPFUL. OUR MFA SOURCE TOLD US THAT THE GREEKS EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS WITH FRG MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY. IN RESPONSE, THEY WERE ASSURED BY GENSCHER THAT GERMANY'S 6 MILLION MARK CREDIT OFFER WAS NOT BEING USED BY TURKEY BECAUSE THE LATTER COULD NOT RAISE THE ADDITIONAL 6 MILLION MARK MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED BY THE FRG'S OFFER OF ARMS SALES.

6. CYPRUS -- ON THE QUESTION OF CYPRUS, THE GREEKS PRESENTED THEIR WELL-KNOWN VIEWS IN A LONG WORKING SESSION AT THE MFA. THE GERMAN RESPONSE WAS RATHER NON-COMMITTAL, ALTHOUGH THE VISITORS EXPRESSED THE DESIRE FOR A PEACEFUL AND JUST SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION. VIEWS WERE ALSO EXCHANGED ON THE UPCOMING CSCE CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE, WITH BOTH ENDORSING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PROCESS OF DETENTE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. ACCORDING TO OUR MFA SOURCES, THE GERMANS REVEALED THEIR UNHAPPINESS WITH US INITIATIVES IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS BEING DISRUPTIVE TO OTHER ISSUES INVOLVED IN DETENTE. THE GREEKS SPOKE OF THEIR INTENT TO PURSUE THE DISCUSSION OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION AT BELGRADE. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND ALBANIA WERE ALSO SUBJECTS REVIEWED BY THE TWO SIDES.

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7. BILATERAL RELATIONS - "THERE ARE NO BILATERAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN GREECE AND GERMANY," GENSCHER ANNOUNCED AFTER HIS SESSION WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, "COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES IS DEVELOPING IN AN EXCEPTIONALLY FRUITFUL MANNER IN ALL SECTORS." THE MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF APPARENTLY CENTERED ON GREECE'S ON-GOING MILITARY PROCUREMENT AS WELL AS ON DISCUSSIONS FOR GREECE TO ESTABLISH A LIGHT ARMS ASSEMBLY PLANT WITH GERMAN ASSISTANCE. MINDFUL THAT THE FRG IS GREECE'S PRINCIPAL TRADING PARTNER, THE GREEKS WERE ALSO ESPECIALLY EAGER TO EXPLORE MEANS OF ATTRACTING GERMAN INVESTMENT. IN ADDITION TO EC MATTERS, THE TALKS WITH PAPALIGOURAS AND ZOLOTAS APPARENTLY DWELT ON THE SUBJECT OF BOLSTERING ECONOMIC RELATIONS. NO SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED, BUT THE GERMANS LEFT BEHIND A TECHNICAL TEAM FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON INCREASING GERMAN INVESTMENT AND ON ALTERATIONS IN THE GREEK INVESTMENT CODE WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED BY EC
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MEMBERSHIP. THE STATUS AND WELFARE OF THE MORE THAN 170,000 GREEK GUEST WORKERS PRESENTLY IN GERMANY WAS ALSO DISCUSSED, WITH EMPHASIS ON EDUCATIONAL MATTERS.

8. MEDIA COVERAGE - GHE GENSCHER VISIT RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN THE GREEK MEDIA, WITH MOST OF THE TREATMENT FAVORABLE TOWARDS THE VISITOR. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIST PRESS, REVERTING TO ITS STANDARD REFRAIN, CLAIMED THAT THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAS HERE TO PUT PRESSURE ON GREECE ON BEHALF OF NATO. FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH GENSCHER, HOWEVER, UDC LEADER MAVROS TOLD THE PRESS THAT "REPORTS IN CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS OF GERMAN PRESSURE FOR GREECE'S RETURN TO THE MILITARY WING OF NATO ARE QUITE UNTRUE." MOST OF THE MEDIA STRESSED THAT THE FRG WAS A GOOD FRIEND WHOSE CONTINUED ENDORSEMENT FOR GREEK ENTRY INTO THE EC IS IMPORTANT. GENSCHER'S OFFER OF FRG ASSISTANCE IN THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE ALSO MADE MANY HEADLINES.

9. COMMENT: IN SUM, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS RELATIVELY LITTLE NEW RESULTING FROM GENSCHER'S PRESENCE IN ATHENS, THE VISIT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A QUALIFIED PLUS FOR BOTH SIDES. THE GREEKS RECEIVED A RENEWED PLEDGE OF UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR EC ENTRY FROM AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY. THEY ALSO WERE ABLE TO PRESENT THEIR POSITIONS ON CYPRUS AND ON THE DISPUTE WITH TURKEY. FOR HIS PART, FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER MADE A GOOD SHOWING HERE, HELPING TO COMBAT, IN

PART AT LEAST, LOCAL SUSPICIONS THAT THE FRG IS PRO-TURKISH.
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